

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /067 W

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R 090645Z FEB 77

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5585

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JOHANNESBURG 0271

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: DECONTROL AFTER ONE YEAR

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, EGEN, SA, US

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH HECKEETT GENERAL MANAGER

REF: (A) STATE 26347 (B) JOHANNESBURG 232 (C) JOHANNESBURG 207

1. REGIONAL LABOFF MET ON FEBRUARY SEVEN WITH J L ISAACS, MANAGING DIRECTOR, AND ALLAN HENOCHSBERG, COMMERCIAL MANAGER, OF HECKETT SA PTY AT THEIR PRETORIA (ISCOR) PLANT TO DISCUSS INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE AS REPORTED IN FINANCIAL MAIL.

2. HENOCHSBERG AND ISAACS DENIED EXISTANCE OF "INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE" AT HECKETT'S BENONI PLANT AND CLAIMED NEVER TO HAVE HEARD OF OR HAD CONTACT WITH METAL AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION (MAWU). THEY DID ADMIT, HOWEVER, RESPONDING TO A PREVIOUS COMPLAINT BY THE INDUSTRIAL AID SOCIETY, WHICH IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MAWU, REGARDING UNDERPAYMENT OF OVERTIME RATES FOR BLACK WORKERS AS STIPULATED BY THE STEEL SECTOR INDUSTRIAL AGREEMENT.

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3. WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE WORKER PIET PHEKO, REFERRED TO IN THE FINANCIAL MAIL ARTICLE (JOHANNESBURG 232), WAS, IN FACT, THE FORMER CHAIMAN OF THE WORKS COMMITTEE AND WHAT WERE THE REASONS FOR HIS DISMISSAL, HENOCHSBERG CLAIMED IGNORANCE. WHEN PRESSED, HE CHECKED HIS FILES AND CONFIRMED THAT PHEKO WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE WORKS COMMITTEE. HENOCHSBERG READ THE MINUTES OF A FEBRUARY FOUR MEETING BETWEEN THE

PERSONNEL DIRECTOR AND THE WORKS COMMITTEE IN WHICH IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT MEMBERS OF THE WORKS COMMITTEE ARE NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR REGARDING THEIR ROLE IN DEALING WITH MANAGEMENT.

4. THE REGIONAL LABOR OFFICER EMPHASIZED THE PROFOUND INTEREST OF THE USG IN ENCOURAGING THE IMPROVEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES OF US FIRMS IN SOUTH AFRICA. HE DISCUSSED THE STATEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE IN 1973 AND VARIOUS STEPS WHICH ARE BEING TAKEN TO UPDATE SUCH GUIDELINES.

5. HENOCHSBERG AND ISAACS RECOGNIZED THE HARM WHICH CAN COME FROM ADVERSE PRESS CRITICISM OF HECKETT'S EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES BUT PROFESSED TO HAVE BEEN EXEMPLARY EMPLOYERS OF THE PAST 21 YEARS. THEY SAID THEY WOULD LIKE THE REGIONAL LABOFF TO VISIT THE BENONI PLANT BUT THAT THIS REQUIRED THE APPROVAL OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD WHO WAS AT A MEETING IN LONDON. THEY EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT INVITATION WOULD, HOWEVER, BE FORTHCOMING UPON RETURN TO SA OF BOARD CHAIRMAN. REGIONAL LABOFF REPLIED HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO ACCEPT.

6. COMMENT: ASIDE FROM REFERENCED FINANCIAL MAIL ARTICLE THERE HAS BEEN NO FURTHER ADVERSE CRITICISM IN PRESS AS YET.
JOHNSON

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